

RESPECTED REPUBLICAN PULLING AWAY FROM THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION ON WAR IN IRAQ

(Mr. PALLONE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, an influential Republican voice on foreign affairs admitted that the war in Iraq is doing more harm than good and that, I quote, "Our course in Iraq has lost contact with our vital national security interests in the Middle East and beyond."

Those are the words of Republican Senator RICHARD LUGAR of Indiana, who went to the Senate floor last night to say that changes in strategy need to be made before September. LUGAR's comments should be listened to very carefully by my Republican colleagues who continue to hold out hope that the President's troop escalation strategy can work.

Senator LUGAR is just the latest to admit that the President's plan is not working and that a new strategy is needed in Iraq. Last week, General Petraeus himself said that we will not meet the target of seeing any positive results from the troop escalation plan by September.

Now, Senator LUGAR's realistic assessment of the war in Iraq is commendable, but words are simply not enough. If LUGAR is convinced that the war in Iraq is no longer in our Nation's best interest, he must join us in finding an alternative that begins to bring our troops home.

TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY OF MARINE SERGEANT SHAWN MARTIN

(Mr. McNULTY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. McNULTY. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to salute and pay tribute to the memory of Marine Sergeant Shawn Martin, who gave his life in service to his country in Iraq. He died on June 20. His funeral will be on Thursday morning.

Sergeant Martin's death is a reminder to all of us that, regardless of how we feel about this particular war, that young men and women across our country put on the uniform of the United States military and are willing to go anywhere in the world at the direction of our government to protect American interests.

It reminds me not to let even a single day go by without remembering with deepest gratitude all of those who, like my own brother, Bill, made the supreme sacrifice, all those like Shawn who made the supreme sacrifice, and all of those who serve in the military with great honor and then come back home, render outstanding service in the community and raise beautiful families to carry on their fine traditions. These are the things that I'm most grateful for today as a citizen of the United States of America.

So today I extend my deepest sympathies to Shawn's wife, to his parents, to all the members of his family for his tremendous service to our country for making the supreme sacrifice, and we shall never forget this true American hero.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2643, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, ENVIRONMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2008

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 514 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 514

Resolved, That at any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2643) making appropriations for the Department of the Interior, environment, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived except those arising under clause 9 or 10 of rule XXI. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. Points of order against provisions in the bill for failure to comply with clause 2 of rule XXI are waived. During consideration of the bill for amendment, the Chairman of the Committee of the Whole may accord priority in recognition on the basis of whether the Member offering an amendment has caused it to be printed in the portion of the Congressional Record designated for that purpose in clause 8 of rule XVIII. Amendments so printed shall be considered as read. When the committee rises and reports the bill back to the House with a recommendation that the bill do pass, the previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

SEC. 2. During consideration in the House of H.R. 2643 pursuant to this resolution, notwithstanding the operation of the previous question, the Chair may postpone further consideration of the bill to such time as may be designated by the Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Washington, my namesake and good friend, Mr. HASTINGS. All time yielded during consideration of the rule is for debate only.

I yield myself such time as I may consume.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I also ask unanimous consent

that all Members be given 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on House Resolution 514.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 514 provides for consideration of H.R. 2643, the Department of the Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill for Fiscal Year 2008. It is an open rule, and allows all Members the opportunity to amend the bill.

□ 1030

Mr. Speaker, the funding levels in the underlying bill make clear the change in priorities of this new Democratic Congress. This bill refocuses our Nation's priorities to ensure that all Americans have access to clean water and air as well as appropriately addressing climate change and conservation, all of which have not been seen since Democrats last controlled this body in 1994. Democrats are restoring our obligation to the American people to protect and preserve the land and shores and all creatures who inhabit this Earth.

I commend Chairman DICKS and Representative TIAHRT for their hard and, perhaps most importantly, bipartisan work on this legislation. I do believe that they did a tremendous job in crafting this bill.

This bill restores our promise to America's underserved minority communities and to our children to ensure that our cherished land, water, and air will be preserved for generations to come. I commend the committee for including funding for important environmental justice programs I have long advocated for such as \$1.1 billion for the Clean Water State Revolving Fund. This is \$437 million above the administration's request and will help over 150 communities with drinking water and wastewater infrastructure projects.

The bill also includes \$140 million for sewer and water grants, which received zero funding in 2007 and was not in the President's budget request this year. Further, this legislation provides \$16 million for rural water technical assistance that was also zeroed out in the President's budget request. We are ensuring that all communities have clean and safe drinking water.

The underlying legislation also includes limitation language that I authored in the 109th Congress, ensuring that EPA respects the needs of environmental justice communities. It appropriate \$7 million for environmental justice programs, the amount that Congresswoman HILDA SOLIS, I, and others requested. This is \$3 million over the administration's budget request and \$2 million over fiscal 2007 levels.

This bill provides much-needed funding for our national parks and wildlife protection. The legislation includes \$2.5 billion for our national parks, \$223 million above the 2007 levels.